

# Canada-China Friendship Society<sup>®</sup> La Société d'amitié Canada-Chine

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Section d'Ottawa. Depuis 1976.

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## 2013: Another successful year!



**Top left:** Dr Vernon Burrows CM, Janice Zaharko (CCFS Member), Dr Wang Qiming (Chinese Embassy) after a presentation. **Bottom left:** Singer Ember Swift translates for fellow musician and partner Guo Jian of the Chinese reggae band Long Shen Dao. **Above:** Left to right—Robert Wright (Ambassador to China 2005-2009); CCFS President Lorraine Farkas; David Mulrone (Ambassador to China 2009-2012); after David Mulrone's presentation at the Annual General Meeting.



## The National Museum of China: The Shaping of China's Self Image

### Summary by Roy Atkinson—Speakers Coordinator

On a very cold January night more than 85 people were treated to an excellent visual and intellectual tour of the Beijing's new National Museum of China by Dr. Victor Rabinovitch, Fellow and Adjunct Professor at Queens University and President emeritus, of the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

Dr. Rabinovitch's lecture started with a description of the symbolic nature of the National Museum's physical location on the east side of the iconic Tiananmen Square across from the Great

Hall of the People and south of the gates to the Forbidden City. Its location signifies its importance as a key part of China's cultural and historical face to the world - in much the same way as as the location of the Smithsonian museums on the Washington Mall.

The new National Museum was deliberately designed to be the largest single museum building in the world. It greatly expanded an earlier museum building which had been opened in 1959 as

*(Continued on page 4)*

# President's Report 2013

The Ottawa community is increasingly interested in China. Growing numbers want to see China's significant achievements and understand its challenges and are visiting China. Mayor Watson recently led a trip of city officials and regional business people to Beijing. The National Arts Centre Orchestra made an impressive first tour of several cities in China. A group of students from Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School were excited about their widely publicized trip to China last spring. Several organizations in Ottawa, although not dedicated to the China theme, held successful conferences on China during the year. In this context, the CCFS-O continued to host monthly public meetings featuring knowledgeable speakers on a wide variety of topics. Attendance at meetings continued to be strong and question periods were lively. Details about our events are included at the end of this report.

Our China Book Club got underway this year. An enthusiastic group of members have been meeting on a regular basis to discuss some of the multitude of books available on China.

We have also enhanced our Facebook page. We are trying to reach out to the community where they are and in an interactive way. Our website continues to be updated. Also we have done our best to advertise the events pertaining to China organized by other organizations, to advise our members of other opportunities to learn more about China and understand it better.

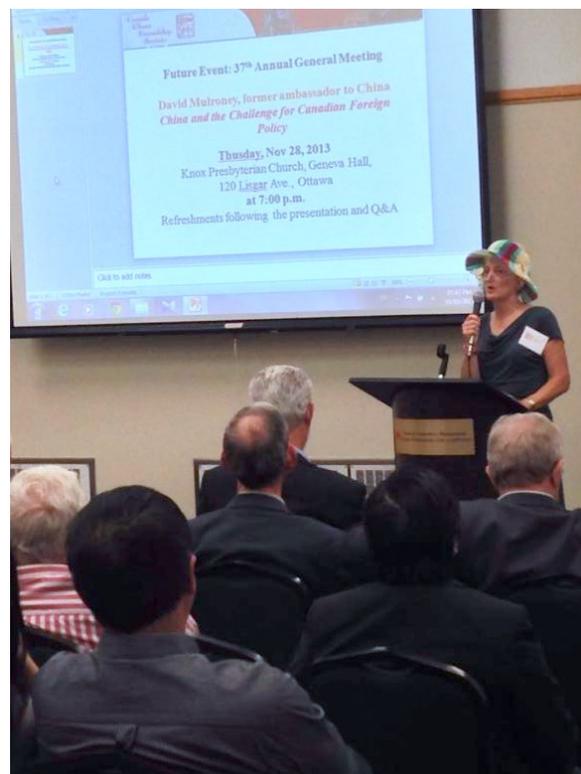
In other activities, the Society sent delegates to events in China, at the invitation of our Chinese counterparts. We sent two students to the Shanghai International Youth Camp in the summer. Another two delegates attended an international conference on elder care in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, in September. Lastly, three delegates are attending an international friendship conference on urban development in Beijing in November. Reports received so far, that is from the first two groups, indicate that our delegates immensely enjoyed their experiences.

This was my fourth and last year as president. I will continue on the executive as immediate past president. We have achieved a lot in the last four years. Above all we adjusted the focus of the Society to promoting awareness and understanding of China, to meet the needs of the community. We have hosted excellent speakers on varied subjects related to the past, present and possible future of China. We formed a board of patrons, with the Honourable Sheila Copps and former ambassador Robert Wright as our first patrons. We have developed other ways to promote interest and understanding, through Facebook, the book club, tours of T&T, etc. As a result the Society has grown over the period and has achieved a much larger profile in the community.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the executive and the other active members for their strong commitment and considerable efforts to carry out their tasks as volunteers. They also attend conferences and other events, and are constantly advocates for the Society. My sincerest thanks to Lolan Merklinger who has been on the executive since 1998 and in the last four years as immediate past president. Also my gratitude to the other executive members who are stepping down or left during the year—David Yip, David Burke, Janice Zaharko and Jean-Pierre Bolduc. Also my thanks to Peter Larson who stepped down as editor of our newsletter. I thank our speakers who devote precious time preparing and delivering without compensation. I thank our patrons for their very helpful support and advice. I thank our members who have attended our events and helped out in other ways to support the Society's work.

*Lorraine Farkas*

Lorraine Farkas



President Lorraine Farkas opening an evening wearing a souvenir from her recent travels in China.

## New executive



**Back row from left:** Gary Levy, Sam Gendreau, Yong-Zhi Wang

**Front row from left:** Margaret McCuaig-Johnston, Jean-Pierre Bolduc, Xueying (Cat) Situ, Roy Atkinson, Lorraine Farkas, Hailin Wang.

**Absent:** Tracy Tian

### Other work of CCFS-Ottawa in 2013:

**Membership and Finances:** Although attendance at our events remained strong, membership has decreased from a high of 225 early in the year to about 190. Finances show a comfortable balance, reflecting careful spending, dues from memberships, revenue from the Chinese New Year's banquet and donations. However, we will need to increase our memberships in order to meet the increasing costs of room rentals and provide a program of interesting speakers, some of whom come from outside the region. Otherwise we will have to raise member dues.

**Executive Committee:** We have achieved an impressive mix on our executive of experienced and inexperienced, younger and older members, women and men. We have also benefited greatly from other loyal members who took on substantial responsibilities. Nine executive committee meetings were held during the year in rent-free premises.

**Chinese Embassy:** We have greatly appreciated our cordial relationship with the Chinese Embassy. Ambassador Zhang hosted a reception in December for CCFS-O members, which included the showing of the Chinese film *Close to the Sun*. The Embassy staff's attended some of our events, provided information materials at events, and generously donated door prizes and wine for our Chinese New Year's banquet.

## CCFS Ottawa Events 2013

### January

Beijing's New National Museum: The Shaping of China's Self-image, Victor Rabinovitch, former CEO, Canadian Museum of Civilization

### February

CCFS-O's Year of the Snake New Year's Banquet, a ten-course banquet for members, friends and distinguished guests.

China's Leadership Change and Economic Policy: Mark Kruger, Minister Counsellor, Economics and Finance, Canadian Embassy in Beijing

### April

Bringing the Miracle of Hearing to Poor Chinese Children, J.B. Robillard, President, Robillard Hearing Aid Centres, Ottawa

### May

Ai Weiwei and the history of political art in China, Professor Ming Tiampo, Carleton University.

### June

China's workers rising: Cathy Walker, former Director, Health, Safety and Environment, Canadian Auto Workers.

### June

Contemporary Chinese Reggae: From Beijing: Guo Jian from the band Long Shen Dao and Ember Swift, singer

### September

China's Innovation Strategy: Wang Qiming, Chinese Embassy, and Margaret McCuaig Johnston, formerly at National Engineering and Science Research Council

### October

Investment in Canada by China's State-Owned Enterprises: Hugh Stephens, Asia-Pacific Foundation, and Craig Wilson, OS Micro Trends

### November

China and the Challenge for Canadian Foreign Policy: David Mulroney, Former Canadian Ambassador to China.

## The National Museum of China: The Shaping of China's Self Image

*(Continued from cover)*

one of China's Ten Great Buildings initiative. In 2003 the new National Museum of China merged the two original museums contained in the building into a single institution. In 2011 after a huge four-year construction project, which retained the original 1959 façade, the museum reopened with more than triple the exhibition space, research facilities and meeting rooms that are used for hosting VIP delegations from China and around the world.

The unification of the two museums into the National Museum brought a new organizing concept, - China and its relationship to world civilization. This significantly changed the orientation and character of the museum's exhibits. To illustrate the new approach Dr. Rabinovitch took the audience on a visual tour of three of the principal galleries.

"Masterpieces of Modern Chinese History" is a mid-sized gallery that displays paintings of events and iconic scenes in the recent creation of modern China. It is a much-visited gallery, notably popular with Chinese visitors. People point and discuss episodes, while parents and grandparents are often seen explaining past

events to their youngsters. A second major installation, called "Ancient China", is a massive set of galleries, begins in prehistory and ends in 1911-12 with the fall of the Qing dynasty and the beginning of the Republic. The exhibits depict China's historic construction of a multi-ethnic country. In some periods, exchanges with foreign countries were a significant factor and helped to spread the technical and cultural achievements of the Chinese people. This historical exhibition presents how the Chinese wish to think of themselves, featuring treasures and images that instill pride in past accomplishments.

A third major installation, titled "The Road to Rejuvenation", is the successor to the Museum of the Revolution. It is an explicitly political exhibition and its purpose is described as "stimulating the love of Party, the country and socialism with Chinese characteristics". There is virtually no mention of issues such as the great famine or the effects of the Cultural Revolution. There are tensions between scholarly and political approaches, with the scholarly taking the lead in the "Ancient History" installation while the political takes the lead in "The Road to Rejuvenation". Mr. Rabinovitch concluded that the new National Museum of China is clearly becoming one of the world's great museums.

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## David Mulroney: Canada needs a unified policy for China

Notes by Roy Atkinson and Lolan Merklinger

At the 2013 CCFS-Ottawa Annual General Meeting, former Ambassador to China David Mulroney provided some insights gleaned from his years as Canada's top diplomat in China. Key to his message was a need for a comprehensive and unified China policy.

According to Mulroney, Canada's foreign policy needs to explicitly recognize that the new China presents both threats (e.g. Cyber-espionage) and opportunities (e.g. Trade) and to develop an integrated strategy that embraces both possibilities.

New communications tools can help us reach our diplomatic goals. For example, the Canadian Embassy's blog on Weibo, (A micro-blogging service similar to Twitter) provides an vehicle for the Embassy to reach very large numbers of Chinese with messages about Canada, Canadian policies, how Canada governs itself, and transparency in government.

We can expect China to provoke more foreign policy discussion

with Canada. To have more influence with China, Canada needs a much deeper and nuanced understanding of China, its issues, its opportunities, and potential threats.

Additionally, more coherence across the Canadian government approach is needed. For example—rather than the current compartmentalized approach to individual issues we need to understand the linkages and the implications among and between individual issues (e.g. Increasing foreign enrolment in Canadian universities and related capacity in visa processing)

Rather than the current fixation with the news cycle, Canadian foreign policy towards China needs to focus on "core Canadian interests and liabilities" and bring a high degree of confidence to the discussion along with a realization that Canada cannot control the agenda.

Perhaps unsurprisingly this call for a China policy was similar in many ways to a presentation made in 2011 to CCFS-Ottawa by Robert Wright, Mr. Mulroney's predecessor in China.

## Canadian delegates to 9th International Shanghai Youth Camp



CCFS-Ottawa selected two youth delegates to the Ninth International Shanghai Youth Friendship Camp—Adele Grandmaison of Saint-Andre-Avellin, Quebec (Right picture: Second from left) and Kevin Chen of Ottawa, Ontario (Left picture: Centre)

The 2013 Youth Camp theme was “Explore Chinese Culture and Experience Shanghai’s Charm.” In 2014, CCFS-Ottawa will be accepting applications for students interested in attending the 10th International Shanghai Youth Camp in 2014.

## Ai Weiwei and the history of dissident political art in China

Summary by Roy Atkinson—Speakers Coordinator

On May 15, 2013 Professor Ming Tiampo, Associate Professor of Art History at Carleton University spoke to a standing-room audience on Ai Weiwei and the history of dissident political art in China. Professor Tiampo presented a series of images that covered the evolution of Ai Weiwei’s work, including many pieces in the upcoming exhibit at the Art Gallery of Ontario, “Ai Weiwei: According to What?”. Professor Tiampo argued that Ai Weiwei’s work show him to be a strong supporter of Chinese history, culture and art. In the tradition of the Chinese literati he has criticised the Chinese Government. She placed Ai’s critique in two broad themes: the unnecessary and mindless destruction of China’s heritage, and graft and corruption that are damaging to the people of China.

Professor Tiampo argued that Ai Weiwei and his politically critical art is part of a long tradition of dissident Chinese artists that extends back at least to the 1100s in the Song Dynasty. The Chinese literati (Scholar-officials) were mostly well-educated men who had earned academic degrees by passing the rigorous imperial examinations. They dominated the politics of China until 1911. Central to tenets of the literati was that free expression was the highest form of artistic expression, and that in a cultivated person their inherent goodness would naturally flow out of

them through their brush and onto the page in the form of calligraphy, painting or poetry. The literati believed that they had the right and the obligation to critique government. Using subtle details painting, poetry, and calligraphy, the literati criticized the governments of the day. This tradition was largely tolerated until Mao Zedong declared that art must serve the nation. Subject matter was strictly controlled and a realistic style was mandatory in all painting. In 1979 this declaration was challenged by Ai Weiwei and his artist colleagues who attempted to show work exploring modern themes such as cubism and drew on the belief of individual artistic freedom of expression. This led to protests which tied them directly to the literati tradition of free expression being the highest form of artistic expression.

Ai Weiwei moved to New York in 1983. For the next 12 years he lived in the artistic community of New York. It was an era of social movement in the city and the political engagement of the artistic community was high. When Ai Weiwei returned to China in 1995 he had a much keener sense of how to reach out to the public and how to make strong and effective social and political statements, often using photography. Since then, Ai Weiwei has emerged as a prominent critic of the Chinese government, bringing together art and politics in provocative and often poetic ways.

# Ottawa partnership mission to Beijing

Margaret McCuaig-Johnston

On November 29th, 2013 I attended, on behalf of CCFS-Ottawa, a presentation at City Hall by Mayor Jim Watson on the mission to China that he led in October, featuring business, technology, tourism and education partnerships. This mission to Ottawa's sister city of Beijing was Ottawa's biggest mission ever; forty business people participated along with representatives of the University of Ottawa, Algonquin College and Elmwood School.

Invest Ottawa was a key organizer of the mission along with Tourism Ottawa. Local companies will invest and start businesses in their sister city while Chinese companies such as ZDG and Jianwei Health Products will set up facilities in Ottawa. Governor General David Johnston was in attendance with the Mayor for the signing of an agreement between the University of Ottawa and Jiaotong University for a new medical research centre. The trade mission coincided with Innovation Conference organized by the Canada/China Business Council at which Mayor Watson gave the keynote address.

We are also very pleased that Mayor Watson will join us as a Speaker at the CCFS meeting the evening of April 15th at 7:30 pm to discuss this mission.



**Left to right:** Margaret McCuaig-Johnston (VP CCFS Ottawa); Warren Creates, founder of Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival, participated in China Mission; Mayor Jim Watson; Karin Howard, former City Councillor, lived for three years in China.

## ABOUT THE CANADA-CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY OF OTTAWA

The CCFS-O aims to help Canadians learn more about China and understand it better. We cover China's past, its present, the challenges it faces and how it deals with them. The CCFS-O holds monthly meetings, open to the public, featuring speakers on a wide variety of topics, ranging from the environment to films in China and political reforms to tai chi. We also hold an annual Chinese New Year's banquet. The CCFS-O is a member of the Federation of Canada-China Friendship Associations.

Details of our events are mailed to members and other interested persons, and posted on our website [www.fccfa.ca/Ottawa](http://www.fccfa.ca/Ottawa) and on Facebook [www.facebook.com/ccfs.ottawa](http://www.facebook.com/ccfs.ottawa). Our monthly events are free for CCFS-O members. There is a small admission fee for non-members.

## BECOME A MEMBER!

We welcome new members from all walks of life who are interested in and want to learn more about China. Membership is open to anyone who supports the aims and objectives of the society and pays an annual membership fee.

The fee for regular members is \$20 for individuals, and \$30 for a family. Student membership (for full-time registered students) is \$12 for individuals, and \$17 for a family.

To join the CCFS-Ottawa, go to our website at: <http://www.fccfa.ca/Ottawa/index.htm> or join at an event!

## CONTACT US



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